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SUBJECT: AUGUST 2009 SUMMARY OF TERRORIST AND
SIGNIFICANT SECURITY INCIDENTS

REFS: A) Algiers 00605

B) Algiers 00667

¶1. (SBU) INTRODUCTION: This cable is a summary of major security-related activities, terrorist threats, and incidents for Algeria during the month of August 2009. The information was obtained from open sources, news reports, and RSO police contacts. Press-based information should not be taken as exact or definitive but can be used to track countrywide patterns and trends. Reported activities are maintained in a master database utilized by the RSO in formulating guidelines for life safety and travel within Algeria. Please note that Algerian media frequently still refer to al-Qa?ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) by its previous name, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). End introduction.

¶2. (U) Terrorist-specific trends: With 44 deaths, August was the second deadliest month thus far in 2009 for security forces in Algeria (surpassed only by 66 security force deaths in June). As a possible indication of the heightened level of security during the holy month of Ramadan, security forces exceeded all other months this year in the number of terrorists killed (90) during full-scale operations throughout the country, most notably in Tizi Ouzou (64 miles east of Algiers) and Jijel (224 miles east of Algiers). In the city of Algiers, a bomb was discovered on August 29 behind a public bus stop, and a member of the "el-Fatah" battalion was arrested.

The Kabylie region (which includes the wilayas of Boumerdes, Tizi Ouzou, Bejaia, Bouira, Bordj Bou Arreridj, as well as the mountainous areas of Jijel, M?Sila, Medea, and Setif) continues to be the most dynamic area in terms of AQIM activities and host government actions. Algerian police expressed concern and surprise regarding the successful AQIM operation in the Tipaza wilaya (located just west of the capital city) that occurred in late July but for which AQIM claimed responsibility in early August.

3. (U) Civil Unrest/Riot: The Annaba region of Algeria experienced two significant protests this month in response to severe flooding and consistent power outages/blackouts that plagued the region throughout the summer.

The first protest reported on August 5th targeted the

local utilities company Sonelgaz. Protestors managed to completely block Route RN44, a roadway connecting Annaba to El Tarf via the Rabah Bitat airport. The second protest reported on August 25 involved over one-hundred separate demonstrations throughout the region's cities to include Oued Forche, Ausas Val Mascort, Seybouse, and others. Throughout a period of 24 hours, protestors flooded the streets, setting old tree trunks and tires ablaze throughout the day and night.

Monthly statistics are as follows:

Bombings: 18
Civilian deaths: 9
Wounded Security force members: 15
Kidnappings: 5
Terrorists arrested/surrendered: 36
False roadblocks: 1
Armed robberies: 3
Protests/Riots: 3

13. (U) DETAILS: Below please find detailed local news reports of select terrorist/security-related incidents throughout the month of August.

August 01:

- A statement attributed to the media committee of al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and published by al-Fajr Media Center was posted claiming responsibility for an attack on an Algerian army (ANP) convoy "on the state road connecting Damous and el-Abadia, exactly north of the Beni

Mileuk municipality (Tipaza Province)." The attack was led by Shaykh Abi-Tamam Abdal Hafiz and resulted in the deaths of at least 15 soldiers (see Algiers 00770).

- The ANP killed 15 terrorists during an air raid that targeted terrorist hideouts in the mountains of Batna. This operation took place in the following regions: Kimel, Taffrante, Zwaye in Arisse, and the forest of Lareba, in the southeast of the wilaya of Batna.

- The ANP, along with communal guards, conducted a search operation in the forest area that borders the wilayas of Bejaia and Bordj Bou-Arreridj. During the operation, troops succeeded in killing the alleged mastermind of the ambush against the gendarmerie in Bordj Bou-Arreridj on June 17 (see Algiers 00667).

August 03:

- The ANP killed eight terrorists in the mountains of Chelala, in the communities of Oudi el-Mah, Merouana, and Seryana during an air raid.

- The ANP killed two terrorists and recovered two weapons (Kalashnikovs) during a military operation through the forests of Timzirte and Yassre. The army was searching for a terrorist support network in the municipality of Timzirte.

August 05:

- In the municipality of Beni Amrane, in the south of the wilaya of Boumerdes (31 miles from Algiers), the ANP surrounded 16 terrorists from Katibat el-Djerrah after demolishing their hideouts. This military operation took place after a sweep of the forest of Oued Djenane in Beni Amrane. One of the most important terrorist hideouts was destroyed.

- In the mountainous region combining Mechatte and Beni Forkane in Mila and Ouled Boufaha in Jijel (224 miles east of Algiers), the ANP destroyed several hideouts that were used by armed terrorist groups that continue to be active in those regions and defused several bombs created by the salafist

terrorists.

-After an entire summer plagued with frequent blackouts and power outages, hundreds of Algerians in Seybouse (approximately five miles from the capital of Annaba) took to the streets to protest the local electric company Sonelgaz. Protestors managed to gridlock RN44, a roadway connecting Annaba to el-Tarf via Rabah Bitat airport.

August 07:

- Security forces killed a terrorist during an ambush in the village of Mazer, near the municipality of Mizrana, about 30 kilometers northeast of the wilaya of Tizi Ouzou (64 miles east of Algiers). Additionally, four terrorists were killed in Ait Melloul between the municipalities of Boukhelifa and Tichy, about 15 kilometers east of the wilaya of Bejaia. The Kalashnikovs of these four terrorists were recovered. A soldier was killed in the ambush.

August 08:

- The ANP destroyed two terrorist shelters of the terrorists still active in the region. In addition, two charred terrorists corpses were found after an air bombing in the mountains of a region called Koufi, in Beni Zayde, west of Skikda.

- Two soldiers were killed and four injured in the explosion of a bomb at the east entrance of Swanine in the municipality of Sidi Daoud.

August 09:

- Security forces in the village of Ait Ouabane in the municipality of Akbil, located some 60 kilometers southeast of the wilaya of Tizi Ouzou (64 miles east of Algiers), surrounded a major terrorist group composed of at least a dozen armed Islamists. The armed Islamists were discovered in their hideouts after an intense air raid that had targeted

the suspected area.

August 10:

- The residents of Mechtrasse, located 40 kilometers to the south of the wilaya of Tizi Ouzou (64 miles east of Algiers), stopped an attempted carjacking in Ihessnawene on the road that leads to the municipality of Souk Itnine. The attack occurred on Friday evening, when a terrorist group composed of three persons blocked the path of the car by using weapons. A group of over 20 young people stopped the attempt.

August 11:

- AQIM leader Abdel Malek Droudkel held a meeting with the emirs of AQIM katibas (variously translated as either brigades or battalions) in the forest of Akefadou, situated between the wilaya of Jijel and Bejaia, to draw up new attack plans for Ramadan 1430/2009. Similar meetings occurred in Boumerdes prior to Ramadan in 2007 and 2008.

- In the municipality of Ben Choud, east of the wilaya of Boumerdes (31 miles east of Algiers), negotiations continued between terrorists and the family of a 27-year-old man kidnapped at the beginning of August. The terrorists demanded a ransom of one billion dinars (about USD 14 million) for his release.

- The explosion of a bomb in the Sidi Massmoudi region (265 miles east of Algiers) in the municipality of Mazara killed two soldiers. This explosion happened during a military operation.

August 12:

- Three Algerians were added to Great Britain's

"Most Wanted" terrorist list compiled by federal government officials. One of the three additions, the Algerian terrorist Abide Hamadou, alias Abou Zayd, is being held responsible for the murder of British hostage Edwin Dwyer. Additionally, U.S. officials have added three international terrorism suspects -- two Algerians and one Mauritanian -- to their terrorist watch list: Hamadou Abide Abdel Hamid Abu Zaid, alias Bilel from Djelfa (Algerian); Amour alias Ilyes Haythem (Algerian); and Abou Abderrahmane Etandaghi Annesse Echankiti (Mauritanian).

August 15:

- Security forces recovered a large quantity of weapons, explosives, and a considerable quantity of chemicals in a hideout discovered in Berraki, situated 30 miles east of Algiers.

- Two communal guards were killed and two others seriously injured in the explosion of two bombs in the municipality of Babors, north of the town of Setif (187 miles east of Algiers). The terrorist attack targeted communal surveillance guards in the region of Babors.

- The explosion of a bomb in Tigzirt (64 miles east of Algiers), killed one gendarme and seriously injured two others. The bomb was remotely operated by a group of armed terrorists.

August 16:

- In the mountains of Babour, in Setif province (187 miles southeast of Algiers) five communal guards were attacked in an ambush in the region of Chorfa. Two guards were killed and three injured.

- An armed confrontation took place west of Ain-Defla, (91 miles southwest of Algiers) between military forces and armed terrorists. Three terrorists were killed.

August 17:

- An AQIM communique claimed responsibility for the August 8 suicide attack against the French embassy in Nouakchott.

August 19:

- Armed bandits driving a white Renault Clio

carjacked a couple in a Toyota Hilux in Cheraga (seven miles east of central Algiers). The armed men forced the victims out by gunpoint and threatened to kill them if they reported the attack to local police.

August 23:

- Security forces arrested one of the most dangerous terrorists (on Algeria's "Wanted" list for 14 years) in the town of Dar el-Beida. Security forces arrested this terrorist, part of the el-Fatah battalion, in possession of falsified documents meant to establish a false identity.

August 24:

- The "Salafist group" for Skikda received orders from AQIM leader Droukdel to perform suicide attacks targeting the ANP. The orders reportedly included information that the first suicide bomber would be the 12-year-old son of the group's previous emir.

- A gendarme was killed and his brigade commander seriously wounded yesterday morning by a bomb in the municipality of Tarek Ibn Ziad in Ain Tanout (91 miles southwest of Algiers). The bomb was placed under a dead corpse discovered recently and exploded as a gendarme and his brigade commander approached the body.

August 25:

- A policeman and two gendarmes were killed in a terrorist attack in Tarik Bnou Ziad. The terrorist group shot the policeman and then exploded a homemade bomb when the gendarmes responded to the scene.

- A 25-year-old tradesman was kidnapped in the municipality of Beni Douala (64 miles east of Algiers) after being forced to stop at a fake road. His vehicle was recovered one hour after. The terrorist group demanded 3 billion dinars (approximately USD 42,134,831 million) in ransom.

- The ANP killed two terrorists during a military operation in the mountains of Tibourbaz (51 miles east of Algiers).

- A massive protest numbering 108 separate demonstrations erupted across Annaba (375 miles east of Algiers), including the participation of the following cities: Oued Forche, Ausas Val Mascort, Seybouse, Column, Bourmet el-Gas, Sidi Harb 1,2,3,and 4, and Faklharine el-Hocine Bouzered. Throughout a period of 24 hours, protestors burned old tree trunks and tires and took to the streets to protest the government's lack of assistance in the wake of severe regional flooding.

August 26:

- ANP troops killed two terrorists in a military operation, in the mountains of Tikirbaze (76 miles southeast of Algiers). The security forces arrested five other terrorists who surrendered.

August 28:

- Security forces dismantled a terrorist support network in the municipality of Yessr (31 miles east of Algiers). The network is composed of eight individuals suspected of giving terrorist information concerning the movements of security forces.

- Security forces in Derrah el-Mizan (64 miles east of Algiers) dismantled a two-person terrorist support network. The family members were aiding terrorists by giving them food, munitions, and information on security forces' movements in the aforementioned region.

August 29:

- The employees of the company Netcom found a bomb in the garden at a bus station (Tafourah) in Algiers. Employees of the company found a "hard object," powder, electrical wires, and mobile phones. The material was recovered, defused, and

transported by the police to the Chateaneuf laboratory for further examination.

- A terrorist attack in Merros (176 miles southwest of Algiers) caused the death of two soldiers and one pedestrian when a homemade bomb that had been hidden inside the soldier's car exploded.

August 30:

- Two terrorists were killed by Security forces in the municipality of Corso. A soldier was seriously injured in the clash, and two automatic weapons were recovered.

- An unidentified terrorist group kidnapped a contractor in the village of Kadiria (76 miles southeast of Algiers).

- Two soldiers were killed in Bordj el-Emir Abdelkader (59 miles south of Algiers). The last

terrorist attack in this city occurred three years ago when two policemen were killed.

PEARCE